

## KU COMMON BOOK

### *The Worst Hard Time*

### Reader's Guide

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

The KU Common Book promotes community and academic engagement through discussions of a common reading experience among faculty, staff, and students. In addition to building valuable connections to individuals across campus, the KU Common Book illustrates the interdisciplinary nature of the subjects we study, and creates an understanding that you are entering a community that explores topics together.

During orientation, you'll receive the 2013-14 KU Common Book - *The Worst Hard Time*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Timothy Egan. This National Book Award winner is a captivating account of the Dust Bowl, the drought and series of dust storms that plagued the high plains during the 1930s.

There is an expectation that you have read the book prior to arriving to campus in the fall. You will be asked to engage with the book through Hawk Week discussion groups, courses, seminars, and a series of events throughout the academic year. We will use the book to examine issues in Kansas and around the world that affected our past – and challenge our future.

#### About the Selection

John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, told the story of the people who fled the effects of the Dust Bowl for California. *The Worst Hard Time* tells the stories of the people who stayed, the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents of people living in Kansas today. Egan follows the lives of real individuals—Native Americans, Hispanic ranchers, homesteaders, Volga German immigrants—in Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Colorado and Texas. Egan challenges readers to think critically about the causes of the Dust Bowl, individual and national responses, and the modern legacy of this era.

*The Worst Hard Time* mixes historical records with first-hand accounts from this period. Some readers will recognize their own family's roots in Kansas, while others will gain a better understanding of the history, landscape, and people of their adopted state.

#### Related Events

Hawk Week KU Common Book Discussions

4pm Sunday, August 25, 2013

*Discussions will be held on residence hall floors for those in Student Housing.*

*Alternative locations will be available for those living off campus. Specific locations to be announced.*

An Evening with Timothy Egan

7:30pm Thursday, September 26, 2013

Lied Center

Coffee & Conversation

featuring Timothy Egan

9am, Friday, September 27, 2013

The Commons (Spooner Hall)

Additional events will be held throughout the fall and spring semesters. Please visit [commonbook.ku.edu](http://commonbook.ku.edu) for a complete list of activities.

## TIPS FOR READING CRITICALLY

Critical reading, the process of active engagement and interaction with texts, is essential to your academic success at KU. It is also essential to your intellectual development. Students who read deliberately retain more information for a longer length of time.

1. **Immerse yourself in the book.** View the reading through the lens of your personal experiences. Your understanding is always shaped by any personal connections to the text and what you know and value
2. **Read with a pen, pencil, or highlighter in hand.** Annotation is at the heart of critical reading. Two common approaches to annotation are *underlining* and *writing in the margins*. In fact, studies show that if you annotate it well, you retain more of the text than if you merely read the text without marking it.
3. **Ask questions as you read.** Stop often and ask questions. “What does this mean?” “Why is the writer drawing that conclusion?” “Why am I being asked to read this text?” Write the questions down - in your margins, at the beginning or end of the reading, in a notebook, or elsewhere.
4. **Analyze themes.** Compare and contrast passages to build your understanding as you move through the chapters. Why did the writer make that argument or use that example? Engage in a dialogue with the writer as you read.
5. **Get to know the characters.** Who are the people in this book? Whose experiences or perspectives most resonate with you and why? How do you relate to them?

## THEMATIC QUESTIONS TO GUIDE READING

### Writing Style/Imagery:

- In what ways (use of language, facts and figures, etc.) does Egan capture the immensity of the Dust Bowl? Please locate examples from the introduction or elsewhere in the book.

### Nature and Humanity:

- According to Egan, what were the main factors that contributed to the Dust Bowl?
  - What role did the government, banks, profiteers and the farmers play in the disaster?
  - Were there elements outside of man’s control (climate/weather, etc.) that played a role?

### History and Impact:

- What is the relevance of the Dust Bowl today? What lessons can be learned from the Dust Bowl?
  - How did the Dust Bowl impact current land use and sustainability practices?
  - How does the impact and the recovery of the Dust Bowl compare with more recent weather disasters such as Hurricane Katrina?

### Politics and Settling the Land:

- What promises of the land or geography encouraged people to settle in this region?
  - What role did the federal government play in encouraging the settlement of the plains and creating the conditions that contributed to the Dust Bowl?

- Why did people stay in this region once the dust storms began? What kept the people of No Man’s Land connected to the land?
- What was the political impact of the Dust Bowl and how did the federal government respond?

### Community and Family:

- How was community fractured during the Dust Bowl? How did the definition of community change around conservation projects?
- Consider the different characters in Egan's story.
  - Which of the families' stories do you find particularly poignant?
  - Which characters do you find most admirable?

## GLOSSARY

**Aquifer:** This term refers to a body of permeable rock that can contain or transmit groundwater.

**Black Sunday:** Occurred on April 14, 1935. One of the final storms of the Dust Bowl that swept throughout western Kansas, southeastern Colorado, the panhandles of Texas and Oklahoma, and northeastern New Mexico causing damage to property and loss of life.

**Civilian Conservation Corps:** The CCC is recognized as the single greatest conservation program in America.

**Conservation:** The act of conserving; prevention of injury, decay, waste, or loss.

**Drought:** This term refers to a period of dry weather, especially prolonged and injurious to crops.

**Dust Bowl:** The 1930s drought that devastated the Great Plains region from 1934-1937. Sustained strong winds swirled dense dust clouds, often referred to as “black blizzards”, which uprooted topsoil damaged by over-farming and erosion.

**Erosion:** This term refers to the process by which the surface of the earth is worn away by the action of water, glaciers, winds, waves, etc.

**Federal Farm Loan Act:** Passed in 1916, this act allowed low interest loans for farming that facilitated rapid settlement.

**Great Depression:** Between 1929 and 1939, the United States entered into the longest-lasting economic downturn in its history. It started with the stock market crash of October 1929, eventually leading to 13-15 million unemployed Americans.

**High Plains:** The High Plains range from land occupying the Texas panhandle and Oklahoma, western Kansas and eastern Colorado and up north to North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. The region is semi-arid and covered by shortgrass prairie, prickly pear cacti and scrub vegetation, with occasional buttes, mesas or other rocky outcrops.

**The Last Man Club:** The Last Man Club was formed by newspaper editor John McCarty in response to two programs set in motion by President Roosevelt. The first of these programs was

Executive Order 7028 which authorized federal agents to buy back land from struggling farmers in the Dust Bowl. The second program was instituted when the Resettlement Administration gave loans to Dust Bowl residents to enable them to “start anew,” in the plains states or elsewhere. McCarty swore not to abandon Dalhart and the High Plains, and to stay “until Hell freezes over.” Members included many prominent business and professional people, including “Uncle” Dick Coon, Dr. George Dawson, Judge Wilson Cowen, and Texas governor James V. Allred. Eventually, even John McCarty, founder of the club, left Dalhart for a better job in Amarillo, Texas.

**Nesters:** This term refers to a squatter, homesteader, or farmer who settles in cattle-grazing territory.

**The New Deal:** During the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt worked to restore the dignity and prosperity to the Americans affected by the economic downturn. The New Deal instituted a series of experimental projects and programs from 1933 to 1936 to change the federal government’s relationship to the U.S. populace.

**No Man’s Land:** This area is now better known as the Oklahoma Panhandle and is a long strip of land located in the far western panhandle of Oklahoma, close to Texas that experienced significant soil damage during the Dust Bowl. This unattached parcel of land had the reputation of being too arid for farming, and, until it was joined to Oklahoma in 1890, it was a haven for outlaws, smugglers, and a source of alcohol adjacent to dry Kansas. The region has always been thinly populated; the three-county Oklahoma Panhandle region had a population of 28,751 at the 2010 census, representing less than one percent of Oklahoma's population.

**Soil Conservation Service:** The SCS provides commercial environmental consultancy specializing in land rehabilitation, environmental audit, and advice and project management.

**Suitcase Farmers:** This term refers to farmers who resided outside the community of No Man’s Land except during the plowing, seeding, and harvesting seasons.

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

Timothy Egan tells the story of the Dust Bowl years through the eyes of the families and individuals living there. The families represent the many social classes and ethnic groups that populated the plains states before and during the “dirty thirties.” He also focuses on towns in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Kansas that were born in the land rushes of the late 1800s and early 1900s, and which lived --- or died--- in the face of ecological and economic disaster. The source of this material is *The Worst Hard Time* unless otherwise noted.

## THE PLACES

**The Llano Estacado-** *introduced pages 17-24*

This is a region in the Southwestern United States including parts of eastern New Mexico and northwestern Texas. It is one of the largest mesas or tablelands in North American. It has a semi-arid climate characterized by long, hot summers, cold winters and extremely low rainfall.

### **The XIT Ranch** – introduced pages 19-27

The massive XIT cattle ranch in the Texas Panhandle operated from 1885 to 1912. Its boundaries enclosed over 3,000,000 acres or 12,000 km<sup>2</sup> — a strip of land 200 miles (300 km) long and 20 to 30 miles (30 to 50 km) along the border with New Mexico.

The ranch started operations in 1885 and while it lasted, it was in some ways run like a small, independent country. At its peak the ranch averaged handling 150,000 head of cattle within its 1,500 miles of fencing. The ranch also erected 325 windmills and 100 dams across its land. However, cattle prices crashed in 1886 and 1887 and by the fall of 1888 the ranch was unable to sell its cattle and make a profit. In 1901, the syndicate that owned the ranch began selling off the land to pay its foreign investors. By 1905, most of the land was subdivided, with large tracts sold to other cattlemen and small amounts of land sold to farmers. The last of the XIT cattle were sold on November 1, 1912 and land sales subsequently increased, setting the stage for the destruction of grassland recorded in *The Worst Hard Time*.

Source: *Wikipedia* - XIT Ranch [wikipedia.org/wiki/XIT\\_Ranch](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/XIT_Ranch)

### **Dalhart, TX** – introduced pages 26-31, 52-58

Founded in 1901, Dalhart was located at the intersection of two railroad lines, one going north to Denver, CO, the other east to Liberal, KS. Located just outside the property of the XIT ranch, it initially catered to the needs of cowboys on leave with their paychecks. In 1929 there were just over 4,000 residents of Dalhart; the 2000 census showed a population of 7,237.

Dalhart was at the epicenter of the Dust Bowl, and many of the stories told in *The Worst Hard Time* take place here. In August 1934 Dalhart became the site of one of the first three erosion-control demonstration projects in Texas, sponsored by the federal land bank, and the first to be devoted specifically to wind erosion. The Work Projects Administration (WPA) and National Youth Administration also had chapters in Dalhart.

### **Boise City, OK** – introduced pages 32-33

Boise City was founded in 1908 by developers J. E. Stanley and A. J. Kline, who published and distributed brochures promoting the town as an elegant, tree-lined city with paved streets, numerous businesses, railroad service, and an artesian well. They sold 3,000 lots to buyers who discovered that none of the information in the brochure was true, except that the land was for sale. Stanley and Kline were convicted of fraud and sent to Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary. The town had 250 residents by 1920. In comparison, Boise City's population was 1,266 at the 2010 census.

Source: *Wikipedia* - Boise City [wikipedia.org/wiki/Boise\\_City,\\_Oklahoma](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Boise_City,_Oklahoma)

### **Baca County and Springfield, CO** – introduced pages 3-6, 27-28

Baca County is located in the southeast corner of Colorado. It shares a border with New Mexico and Oklahoma to the south and with Kansas to the east.

The town of Springfield was named for Springfield, Missouri, the origin of many of the early settlers of the town. The town of Springfield was originally organized by the Windsor Town Company in 1887. It is believed that the town was settled in 1888 or 1889 by Frank Pierce Tipton, who had travelled to Springfield from Moulton, Iowa, via Springfield, Missouri, in 1886 or 1887 in a covered wagon. Frank Tipton secured the title to 80 acres (320,000 m<sup>2</sup>) which was the original town site.

Sources: *Wikipedia* - Springfield, CO [wikipedia.org/wiki/Springfield,\\_Colorado](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Springfield,_Colorado)

Town website: [springfieldcolorado.com](http://springfieldcolorado.com)

### **Shattuck, OK** – *introduced pages 60-61*

Shattuck, incorporated in 1906, is located in northwestern Oklahoma, east and south of the Panhandle. It was home to a community of Volga German immigrants from Russia. As of the census of 2000, there were 1,274 people living in Shattuck.

### **Inavale, NE** – *introduced page 242, with the year 1936*

Inavale flourished during the “wheat boom” years, but began to decline when prices for wheat crashed, and was further crippled by the Great Depression and the drought years of the 1930s. Inavale is now a ghost town.

## **THE PEOPLE**

### **Associated with Dalhart TX**

#### **The White family** – *introduced pages 8-9*

Bam White was a cowboy, part Cherokee, Irish and English, who had grown up working as a cowboy and ranch hand. His wife Lizzie had Apache and Dutch ancestry. In 1926, Bam, his wife and three children were travelling from Las Animas, CO, where large ranches were being divided up and jobs for cowboys were becoming scarce, heading for Littlefield, TX, where Bam hoped to find ranch work. Hardships along the way —food shortages, cold, and the death of his horses — stranded the family in Dalhart, TX, near the “No Man’s Land,” of the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles.

The family started as share-croppers just outside Dalhart, and Bam also made money selling skunk hides. By 1930 they had saved enough to buy their own place—a two room half dug-out with tar paper roof. There Bam grew some crops and tried to keep some of the ground in grass. At the time this book was written (in 2006) Melt White, Bam’s son, still lived with his wife Juanita in a house he had built at the edge of Dalhart.

*Interview with Melt White-* [pbs.org/wgbb/americanexperience/features/interview/dustbowl-witness-white](https://www.pbs.org/wgbb/americanexperience/features/interview/dustbowl-witness-white)

#### **John McCarty** – *introduced page 55*

McCarty was a newspaper editor, town booster, and founding member of the “Last Man” Club, though in fact he was not the last man to leave Dalhart during the dirty thirties. McCarty was known for his editorials in the local newspaper the Dalhart Texan that idealized the Dust Bowl and minimized the tragedy. After leaving Dalhart, he took up painting, “concentrating on art that depicted dust storms as heroic and muscular” (pg. 311). He died in 1974 at the age of 74.

*Source: Wikipedia - Dalhart* [wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalhart, Texas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalhart,_Texas)

#### **Dr. George Waller “Doc” Dawson** – *introduced pages 28-29*

George “Doc” Dawson came to the high plains from Kentucky in 1907 for his health, to cure breathing problems. Together he and his wife Willie Catherine Dawson ran the hospital and sanitarium in Dalhart—the only hospital for hundreds of miles, serving townspeople, cowboys and farmers. He tried farming wheat and cotton to accumulate a nest egg for his retirement, but without success. He was also a founding member of the Last Man Club, and though his own finances were failing, he turned again to serving the Dalhart community. He established and maintained a relief house and soup kitchen, the Dalhart Haven, with help from other Dalhart business men.

#### **R. S. “Uncle Dick” Coon** – *introduced pages 30, 54-55*

The forces of nature were not kind to Richard Coon. He had lost everything but his life in the 1900 Galveston, TX hurricane. This was the deadliest hurricane in US history, with an estimated death toll

between 6,000 and 12,000 individuals. (For comparison, Hurricane Katrina, the deadliest storm of recent times, claimed approximately 1,800 lives.) He settled in Dalhart almost by accident, and eventually became one of its wealthiest residents, owner of the theater, the hotel, and many other Dalhart businesses. He was the second member of the Last Man Club after its founder, John McCarty. With the 1929 stock market crash land prices in Texas began to fall, and Uncle Dick took the opportunity to buy up real estate in Dalhart. Unfortunately, land values did not increase as he had anticipated, but plummeted with the arrival of the Dust Bowl years. Though his own financial circumstances were deteriorating, he helped to finance Doc Dawson's social service and soup kitchen, the Dalhart Haven. Poor health finally forced him to leave Dalhart for Houston, where he died, nearly as poor as he had started out in life.

### **The Herzstein family** – *introduced page 29*

The Herzsteins, originally from Clayton, NM, were the only Jewish family in town. They were clothiers, providing ready-made clothes and current fashions to the townspeople of Dalhart.

### **Associated with Inavale, NE**

#### **The Hartwell family** – *introduced page 2 and pages 242-248*

Don Hartwell's family had come to Nebraska in 1880; he farmed land in Inavale. After four years without a crop, he determined to keep a diary of his struggles. He painted a thoughtful, and at times acerbic picture of life on the plains, and kept his writings a secret, even from his wife Verna. They had no children, and Inavale, their hometown, is now a ghost town.

### **Associated with Springfield and Lamar, Baca County, CO**

#### **The Osteen family** – *introduced pages 3-6*

The Osteens came to No Man's Land around 1909 following rumors of jobs to be had building a large, new dam on the Cimarron River. There were no jobs, but the family stayed and homesteaded 320 acres in nearby Baca County, Colorado. They lived in a dug-out, raised cows for milk and hens for eggs, and bartered for other goods. Ike's father died at age 46, leaving a widow and nine children, including the youngest, Isaac (Ike). Ike's mother insisted that he attend school and get a high school diploma, the first of his family to do so. Ike graduated in 1935 as class Salutatorian, but he had also managed to help support his mother and siblings. The family acquired their first tractor in 1929, and Ike (then age 12) and his brother Oscar made money plowing other people's fields for a dollar an acre. But by 1932, with dust storms raging, no one was paying to have more land plowed. After graduation Ike left Baca County, giving his half of the homestead to his brother Oscar. He worked for the railroads, joined the Army in World War II, and fought in the D-Day invasion of France. Eventually he returned to Baca County. At the time this book was written, Ike and his wife Lida Mae were still alive, living in Baca County not far from the site of the original Osteen family dugout.

#### **The Clark family** – *introduced pages 6-8*

Louise Walton might seem like an unlikely person to find living in the High Plains through the dustbowl years. She had lived in New York City, had a career as actress and Broadway dancer. She also suffered from lung disease, and in the 1920s, the air of the southwest and the high plains was often prescribed as a cure for lung diseases. So Louise came to Colorado for the pure air. There she met a rancher, married, and settled down. But the very air that had brought her to Colorado eventually had a devastating impact on Louise and her family. In 1935, her only child Jeanne, aged 8, was a victim of dust pneumonia. She survived and at the time this book was written, she still lived in Baca County, her lungs still scarred by her passage through the dust storms in the 1930s.

### Associated with Boise City, OK

#### **The Lucas and Shaw families** – *introduced pages 35-42*

William Carlyle “Carlie” Lucas and his wife, Dee Lucas arrived in No Man’s Land in 1914 as homesteaders, when their daughter Hazel was about 9 years old. They began their life in Oklahoma living in a small dugout, and after a few years were able to begin building a wood-framed above ground house. But before the house could be finished, it was carried away by a powerful storm. In 1922, at age 17, Hazel became a school teacher in a one-room school house, and at 18 married local boy and fellow teacher Charlie Shaw. In 1929, the young couple moved briefly to Cincinnati, where Charlie studied mortuary science; after one year in Cincinnati Hazel returned to her beloved prairie and continued teaching without pay, as the stricken farm communities could not afford to pay any teachers. Hazel and Charlie had three children, but only two escaped the dust pneumonia. Charles Senior died in 1971. Hazel died in 2003 at the age of 99.

#### **The James family** – *introduced page 40 and Chapter 2*

“One of the last of the big ranching families.” Father Walter James, wife Mettie James, and six children: Andy, Jesse, Peachey, Joe Bob, Newt and Fannie Sue.

#### **Caroline Henderson** – *introduced page 154*

Caroline Henderson had graduated from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, and married a farmer. They too tried to make a living out of No Man’s Land, and like others, they prospered during the good years before 1929, and like others, lost everything in the wheat crash and the Dust Bowl years. Carol’s correspondence with friends in the East provides a personal glimpse of life on the High Plains during those years.

#### **Will Crawford** – *introduced page 45*

Will Crawford married Sadie White from Wichita (no relation to the Whites of Dalhart, TX). Sadie worked in a factory in Wichita sewing overalls, and was intrigued by the size of the overalls he special ordered. Sadie sent him a message in the pocket of the overalls saying she was looking for “a real man.” Will went to Wichita to meet Sadie, and apparently he was real enough for her. They married, and Will brought her to Boise City. Stresses of the Dust Bowl later led Will to become an alcoholic.

#### **The Folker family** – *introduced pages 46- 50*

Fred Folker and his wife Katherine came to the Oklahoma panhandle from Missouri. Katherine never warmed to the open, empty environment, but Fred had high hopes of farming and raising fruit trees on his 640 acre farm. Initially, mechanized agriculture, with tractor and plow, enabled him to produce prodigious amount of wheat, and to support his wife, daughter Faye, and sons in style. But even his tender care could not keep the farm, or the trees alive through the crash in wheat prices and the dustbowl years. But the family stayed on in No Man’s Land. Fred farmed until his death 1965 at the age of 83; Katherine died in 1976 at age 90. Their children still own the land their parents’ homesteaded.

### Associated with Shattuck, OK

#### **The Ehrlich family** – *introduced in chapter 4*

The Ehrlichs were part of the Volga German or *Russlanddeutschen* migration to the plains states, where they also became known as the High Plains Deutsch. George Ehrlich, patriarch of the Ehrlich family, came to the US from Russia as an 18 year old in 1890-91. He originally settled with family in LeHigh, KS, but later moved to Shattuck, OK, where he was still able to stake a land claim. George



and his wife, Hanna Weis, had ten children, seven girls and two boys. To see photos of a dugout and frame house belonging to the Ehrlich family visit the town of Shattuck's website [shattuckok.com/HalfDugout.html](http://shattuckok.com/HalfDugout.html)

## ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUALS

**Hugh Bennett** – introduced pages 125-127, 133-135

Hugh H. Bennett (April 15, 1881 – July 7, 1960) was a pioneer in the field of soil conservation. A native of North Carolina, Bennett graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1903. He joined the U. S. Department of Agriculture in the early 1900s, and his research on soil in the U.S. and abroad convinced him that soil erosion was a serious environmental problem. In the 1920s he wrote about soil erosion for popular magazines and scientific journals. In 1928 he co-authored a United States Department of Agriculture publication titled, "Soil Erosion: A National Menace," which is regarded as his most influential work. Bennett's efforts at conservation were so successful that he is credited with saving the dust bowl territory.

Bennett did not confine himself to simply studying soil erosion, or to writing scientific articles on conservation. He was successful because of his skill in organizing political support at the national level, and in working with farmers at the local level. Bennett was instrumental in the formation of the Soil Conservation Society of America (now the Soil and Water Conservation Society), was named director of the U. S. Soil Erosion Service in 1933, and in 1934 his testimony before Congress (and a dust storm which reached all the way to Washington, D.C.) convinced Congress to pass the Soil Conservation Act of 1935. He embarked on a campaign to preserve and restore the soil by reforming farming practices, convincing farmers to implement practical soil conservation measures.

Bennett received many awards and honors for his work during his lifetime. He died in 1960 at age 79, and in 2000 was posthumously named a charter inductee into the USDA Hall of Heroes. Bennett is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Sources: Wikipedia – Bennett [wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh\\_Hammond\\_Bennett](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Hammond_Bennett)

Surviving the Dust Bowl- Biography: Hugh Bennett

[pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/dustbowl-bennett/](http://pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/dustbowl-bennett/)

**The native peoples of the plains** – introduced in pages 15-19, 26-27, 68-69

Though indigenous peoples lived in the United States at least 13,000 years ago, in relation to *The Worst Hard Time*, it is relevant to briefly discuss the history of Native Americans in relation to their contact with the settlers of No Man's Land during the time of the Dustbowl and the ultimate emigration of native peoples from the high plains.

As European population density in eastern North America increased, many native nations were uprooted and forcibly relocated westwards. "Indian removal" was a 19th-century policy of to relocate Native American tribes living east of the Mississippi River to lands west of the river. Early in the history of the United States, beginning with the presidency of Thomas Jefferson, America's policy had been to allow Native Americans east of the Mississippi to remain on their lands if they became assimilated or "civilized". If they adopted a sedentary agricultural lifestyle, it was believed they would become economically dependent on trade with white Americans, and be willing to give up land in exchange for trade goods. The so-called "Five Civilized Tribes" of the southeastern states— the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Muscogee/Creek, and Seminoles — were in fact already agriculturalists and many had become successful and prosperous farmers in the new nation.

However, in the 19th century this policy gave way to one of relocation and replacement or "land exchange." Native Americans would relinquish their land in the east in exchange for equal or comparable land west of the Mississippi River. The result, over a period of approximately 90 years, was a complex and bewildering series of treaties, relocations, and land deals, with the US Civil War thrown in for good measure. In 1817, the Cherokee agreed to cede two large tracts of land in the east for one of equal size in present-day Arkansas. In 1830, the Indian Removal Act was signed into law by President Andrew Jackson. This initiated a series of removals, voluntary or forced, of peoples from the southeastern United States to lands in what would become Arkansas, Kansas, Nebraska and especially Oklahoma. The enforced relocation west of the Mississippi, largely on foot, entailed great hardship and loss of life; it is often referred to as "The Trail of Tears" or "The Trail of Death". Eventually, most of the lands west of the Mississippi that had been promised to Native Americans by treaty or land swaps were opened for homesteading by white Americans.

Many of the people who left the dustbowl for California and other western states were of native ancestry. Thus California eventually became a home for Native Americans who traced their origins to the eastern North America and the plains states, as well as the native Californian tribes.

Sources: Oklahoma Historical Society [digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/a/am010.html](http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/a/am010.html)  
Wikipedia- Plains Indians [wikipedia.org/wiki/Plains\\_Indians](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Plains_Indians)  
Library of Congress-Immigration, Native Americans  
[loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/native\\_american2.html](http://loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/native_american2.html)  
Morris, John Miller (2003) *El Llano Estacado: Exploration and Imagination on the High Plains of Texas and New Mexico, 1536-1860*. Texas State Historical Assn., 424 pp.  
Indian Removal [pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2959.html](http://pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2959.html)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Library Guide

KU Libraries has created an extensive online Library Guide to complement the use of *The Worst Hard Time*. The guide includes both print and electronic resources included in Egan's bibliography, as well as additional resources related to the Dust Bowl, American History, and the subject's connections to the University of Kansas. The guide can be found at [guides.lib.ku.edu/commonbook2013](http://guides.lib.ku.edu/commonbook2013).

### Timeline

A comprehensive timeline of the events related to the Dust Bowl was compiled by PBS in relation to their special "Surviving the Dust Bowl" and can be found at [pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/timeline/dustbowl](http://pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/timeline/dustbowl)

### Other Resources

A list of other resources, including book reviews and the author's website can be found at [firstyear.ku.edu/resources](http://firstyear.ku.edu/resources).

### For more information about KU Common Book

The KU Common Book program is coordinated by the Office of First-Year Experience. If you would like to learn more about this year's selection, related events, the selection process, or the KU Common Book Committee, please visit [commonbook.ku.edu](http://commonbook.ku.edu). If you have any additional questions, please email [commonbook@ku.edu](mailto:commonbook@ku.edu)